

POLICY BRIEF: SAFETY & PROTECTION OF MINORS



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Harvard Human Resources

Policy Summary

Each year more than 50,000 minors interact with Harvard University through camps, academic enrichment experiences, and myriad other programs. The *Policy for the Safety & Protection of Minors* establishes basic guidelines and processes to promote their well-being.

The Policy *will not apply to*, among others: (1) minors receiving medical or dental care, (2) minors who remain under the supervision of their parents or guardians, (3) minors involved in research studies, or (4) minors enrolled full time at Harvard College or the Graduate and Professional Schools.

This summary offers an overview of the minimum standards set by the Policy. Tubs and individual Programs are encouraged to elaborate on the minimum standards in ways that meet their unique needs.

Behavioral Guidelines. The Policy sets out Guidelines for Interacting with Minors. The Guidelines address awareness, boundaries, and various appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Everyone who interacts with minors should promote a safe environment for them. Physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries have particular importance. Physical discipline is prohibited, as is providing tobacco, alcohol, or other adult materials. Parents or guardians should be notified of gifts, whether given or received, and of online communications with minors. One-on-one meetings with minors in private spaces should be avoided whenever possible.

Making a Report. If a member of the Harvard community has evidence of child neglect or abuse, or a reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse, the individual must report the matter as outlined in the Policy. The Harvard University Police Department is trained to take such reports, at (617) 495-1212, and assistance is available for making reports.

Program Requirements. The requirements apply to Harvard-related programs both on- and off-campus. They also apply to outside parties that rent Harvard facilities for activities involving minors. The basic program requirements are:

1. **Registration.** Every youth-serving program must complete an online registration that calls for, among other information, its dates, location, staff, and expected number and ages of participants. The responsible Tub Sponsoring Office (TSO) will evaluate the information, consult as appropriate with the Program Administrator to reduce risks, and approve or disapprove the program. TSOs may also consult with the University's Youth Protection Officer for further guidance.
2. **Background Screening.** Certain Responsible Adults must complete a satisfactory background screening before working with minors. In residential programs, background screening is required for all staff and volunteers who have access to the residences. Background screening is also required in programs involving physical contact, disrobing, athletics, or private interaction with a minor without another adult present.
3. **Training on Working with Minors.** Anyone required to have a background screening must also complete Harvard's online training program on working with minors.

Implementation. Each youth-serving program designates a Program Administrator, who must be a Harvard faculty or staff member or a Harvard student. The Program Administrator has responsibility for registering the program and ensuring completion of the required background screenings and training for Responsible Adults. Each Tub designates a Tub Sponsoring Office (TSO) to assist the program administrators and to oversee compliance. In addition, the University-wide Youth Protection Officer supports the Tubs and their youth-serving programs to reduce risk, address problems, and promote best practices.

For full details, please read the *Policy for the Safety & Protection of Minors*, together with complementary policies of the unit or program. Visit <http://youthprotection.harvard.edu> or email youthprotection@harvard.edu for further information.